

Technology brings new hope for the blind

On Saturday, May 6, 1972, the Toledo Society for the Blind's rehabilitation department and the Toledo Board of Education's program for the visually impaired, sponsored an Auditory, Tactile, and Visual Exposition. The exposition was held in our auditorium and cafeteria. A dozen different organizations and businesses concerned with the rehabilitation and technological developments for the blind were represented.

The Library of Congress working through the Toledo Public Library, had a display on Talking Book machines.

Literature was available from the American Printing House for the Blind, describing aids and appliances available. The American Foundation for the Blind also had a small display of measuring devices, aids for use around the home, in the kitchen, and for communications. Many of the new sensory aids that have been developed by Sensory Aids Corporation of New York, were exhibited.

This included the Aud-a-Ball Soccer Ball. Also, Worldwide Games, Delaware, Ohio, distributed catalogs.

Eye Gate House from Detroit, had different auditory and visual learning devices available. Among the items demonstrated were a cassette duplicator and telephone techniques audio notebook program.

Among the more sophisticated aids was the Apollo Electronic Visual Aid closed circuit TV system from Apollo Lasers of California. This was exhibited by Efficiency Systems, Inc., Maple Heights, Ohio. This is a system whereby a person with only two percent vision can enlarge reading material up to forty times. This system also has a reverse image modification, when, instead of viewing black letters on a white background, the person can read white letters on a black background, thereby minimizing glare. Many people from the Society's programs tried this machine and one individual stated that, for the first time in 27 years, he was able to read print again. This complex system is available for \$1,700.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, provided two other sophisticated devices. First, the Pathsounder, which is a small electronic travel aid for the blind designed to supplement both protection and travel information and is obtained with a long cane. This cane provides protection for the lower half of the body and locates the surface at the point the traveler will next step. It also provides good travel data for the lower half of the body. The part of the body above the hips, however, passes through space where the cane cannot provide data, and it is for this part of the body that the Pathsounder provides protective travel information.

Pathsounders detect an object at six feet and emit a low beeping sound. As the individual approaches closer, the sound becomes louder. When the individual is within 30 inches, the sound changes in pitch. Pathsounder has been found to be a great boom to multiple handicapped individuals, particularly those who are confined to wheelchairs. This instrument is still in the experimental stages and is not available commercially.

The second M.I.T. device is called the Tac-Com which is a communication system for the deaf and deaf/blind. A Tac-Com is a portable receiver carried on the person and operated by long-lasting rechargeable batteries. The receiver presents a vibro-tactile display to the user when it is energized by an induction field. The stimulus is distinct and pleasant and can be coded to meet many functional requirements. These requirements could be to indicate a doorbell ringing, or that a telephone is ringing, or even designed into a Morse code-type of communicator.

The receiver can be carried by an individual in a shirt pocket or holder attached to the side of the body. It is about the size of a small transistor radio and weighs less than seven ounces.

The Tac-Com system is presently installed in the National

Center for the Deaf/Blind in New York and is being evaluated as a fire alarm warning device and a doorbell for the deaf/blind.

There were between 85 and 100 people who came to the exposition and many of them were parents with their small children. It was expressed that this was a very worthwhile project and people had hoped that in the following years an exposition of this type might be available on a larger scale.

If eventually available on a larger scale, one of the main items of interest would be the Optacon. This is a portable electronic device that enables a totally blind person to read ordinary printed matter immediately and independently.

The Optacon weighs approximately eight pounds and consists of two parts: a small electronic camera and a larger box that contains a finger-sized array of vibratory reeds. As the blind person moves the camera over the print with one hand, he senses vibratory images of the letters with the finger tips of the other hand. The Optacon simply copies the pattern on the page into vibratory patterns and can be used with any style and a great variety of materials.

At the present time, the Optacon is intended to supplement Braille and tape recordings by offering immediate access to printed documents not available in the other media.

The Optacon has been developed at Stanford University. These models are now available at \$5,000 each. Several agencies in Ohio now are using these and their functions seem to be very comprehensive. When funds become available, the Toledo Society for the Blind should have these units to use for the training of blind people.



Visual Aid closed circuit TV system put into use.



Instructions on usage of the Pathsounder.

Braille transcribers

Four volunteer Braille transcribers who are affiliated with Collingwood Avenue Temple Sisterhood of Toledo, attended a regional meeting of the National Braille Association at the Holiday Inn, Saddlebrook, N. J., on May 2nd and 3rd.

Representing the Collingwood sisterhood were: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Knisely, 5849 Alexa Lane, Sylvania, Ohio; Mrs. Robert Deutsch, 4233 Nantucket, Toledo; and Mrs. Mervin Levey, 3338 Kingsgate Blvd., Toledo.

They attended workshops on textbook format, foreign language textbooks, proofreading, Nemeth Code (Braille mathematics), and twenty questions pertaining to problems encountered in Braille transcribing.

Braille transcribers who recently received certificates from the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., are: Mrs. Arnold Page, 2922 Pembroke; Mrs. Andrew Palko, 9101 Mandell, Perrysburg, Ohio; and Mrs. Al Steger, 3263 Milstead.

The Toledo Society For The Blind NEWS

A NEWS LETTER TO HELP YOU BECOME BETTER INFORMED ABOUT THIS RED FEATHER AGENCY

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1819 Canton Avenue

Telephone 243-1211

An invitation for you and your friends



Society staff workers Carol Wagner, Linda Ratz, and Pat Brown admire lovely flowers planted by Mrs. Thompson of the Toledo Women's Garden Club, as a welcome to all visitors to the Society Building.

Please come and visit us at our home on the corner of Canton and Southard. You may be surprised at the extent of our operations. We have a dedicated staff and excellent facilities for the training and rehabilitation of near-sighted and blind people.

Let us take you through our Sheltered Workshop and rehabilitation facilities. Let us show you how we train a blind person to get around on his own, travel to and from work, and prepare for a self-sustaining job.

Built inside of our building, we have a modern home, including a kitchen, dining room, bedroom, and bath which are fully furnished and equipped with electric and gas ranges, washing machine and all other common household appliances.

Here we teach the blind people how to keep house, how to shop, and how to mark their canned goods so they can identify cans of peas from cans of beans.

Come visit any day from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. except Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday.

OUR CHRISTMAS CARD PROGRAM 1972

For the last several years, in order to supplement our necessary income, the Society has engaged itself in a holiday card program.

We like to think you like our cards because you have asked for more each year.

Toledo Society for the Blind holiday cards offer "Season's Greetings" and something more. They represent your contribution to the Society's many activities and special "extracurricular" programs which are not provided for by United Appeal funds. Among these are summer camp, eye screening for young people, the community medical clinic at St. Vincent Hospital, family nights, and help for blind bowlers.

The cards are easy to order. Make your selection from one of the three enclosed samples, fill out the enclosed postpaid order form, and drop it in the mail.

You will not receive a bill or invoice from us for these cards. We only ask that you think of our needs and make a contribution to the Society. Anything over the amount you usually pay for your holiday cards is tax deductible.

If you wish, the cards may be imprinted with your name, but please allow \$3.00 per card selection for this extra service.

You can feel especially good about sending these lovely cards, knowing that your contribution has given the Society an opportunity to continue these important activities.

Earl Brown

A man you should know

Earl Brown became blind at the age of 39.

With no special skills, an average education, and average job capabilities, he had no place to go in the existing job market except to the Toledo Society for the Blind Sheltered Workshop.

After a short time, he went through a 12-week evaluation program in Cleveland, but closed doors still faced him.

He became discouraged, thinking he would have to spend the rest of his life being inactive. Earl had worked and taken care of himself ever since he was 15 years old. Now to be limited like this was almost unbearable, but he continued on, missing work only when he was really ill.

On many occasions, he talked with Lyle Kirk, then director of the Society, and with the counselors about job opportunities, but at the time nothing was available. Yet, he did not give up.

Earl started to contact people in the Ohio Bureau of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind. He also talked to everyone who would listen about getting into some productive fields. He was encouraged to take white-cane mobility and go into rehabilitation training as a vending stand operator. This was like a dream come true.

Earl went to Lima, Ohio to work with a man who operated a vending stand and stayed there six weeks. He quickly learned the operation and when he came back to Toledo, Tom Taylor of Columbus, Bureau of State Services vending

stand supervisor, started Earl opening and working the stand at the Lucas County Welfare Building at 3055 Monroe Street.

The stand had been closed temporarily because it was felt to be unproductive. It had been doing about \$30 business a day when Earl took over. Within a month, it increased to about \$50, climbing thereafter to \$70.

He took a great deal of pride and interest in his customers' needs and tried to provide the stand with a wide variety of merchandise. Some people have said they hardly knew that Earl was blind when they

watched him operate.

As in every business, all is not sunshine. Earl has had about ten break-ins. Each time a small amount of merchandise was taken.

His business dropped considerably when approximately 60 employees from his building were transferred to another location.

But he is looking forward to bigger and better things. He started Braille lessons in order to become more self-sufficient. Also, he is hoping for a larger vending stand in the near future.

The people of the Services for the Blind have assured him that he will be in line for this, due to his diligence at his present location.

All this has come about through hard work, patience, and prayer.

There have been many disappointments along the way but Earl is grateful for the opportunity he has been given to be able to serve and work for what he gets.

He is happy to be a productive citizen and has many people to thank for their faith in him and their patience. Anything is

The Sign Post



The Society has changed its phone number to 243-1211. In today's busy world, growth usually means more telephone lines. So it was at the Society. Since 1957 we have been capably served by just one line, but for the last year we have had too many complaints of being unable to reach us by phone. "Line busy" was common. To help alleviate the problem, we've added several new lines to our phone service.

New Lines—More Service—Just Dial 243-1211

Thanks to several area businesses which supply work for our Sheltered Workshop, we were able to furnish summer jobs for several of our area visually handicapped high school and college students. The students—Mary Ruth Reihing, Richard Tramille, Richard Krause, and Colleen Spain, were welcome additions to our work force and we wish them well on their return to school.

PROGRAM CHAIRMEN TAKE NOTE! The Society has a number of special programs and films available for your groups' meetings. They include the very popular "Save Your Sight" film on sight preservation; slide lectures on the various programs of the Society; and panel groups of three blind adults discussing subjects of homemaking, our industrial workshop, or Braille-reading demonstrations. There is also a brand new film available "Do You Know What To Do When You Meet A Blind Person" which has been generously purchased for the Society by the Independent Order of Foresters. For more information call Mrs. Secor Frazier at our new number 243-1211.



Ruth Roessler, Lima, Ohio, is living in the Residence maintained by the Toledo Society for the Blind, while training in the Sheltered Workshop. Here she is shown learning the locations of Toledo streets, buildings, intersections, as part of her mobility training.

possible with prayer and rehabilitation which provide the courage to face life's problems.

Earl Brown has this kind of courage.

Jeff Zavac continues his musical career in college

Jeff Zavac, blind since birth, had his 18th birthday in August and is now a college student. He received a musical scholarship at the Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati. Jeff has unusual musical ability, both at the piano and with a saxophone.

Jeff played his saxophone in the St. John's marching band while he attended high school. With his keen memory, he was able to learn all the intricate marching formations—where to be at the right second. He also participated in bowling, swimming, and many other sports.

This past summer Jeff was a counselor at our Camp Yukita for the blind, located at Catawba. He had received his life saving certificate and served with his sighted sister, Regina, as one of the camp's lifeguards. Of course, Jeff was well acquainted with the camp because he had spent many summers there enjoying the camp's activities. One of his supervisors said of him, "Jeff is always a good friend to have at camp". Before he became a counselor, Jeff paid his own way to camp by participating in its entertainment. Every summer he enjoyed playing his saxophone in Camp Yukita's band.

When Jeff was 13 and a student in the eighth grade, he said he wanted to "run like the wind . . . free, unfettered, feet flying—instead of feeling". A 'beep box', which Jeff called a sound device oscillator, was used when he participated in marine corps physical fitness tests at Columbus where he ran in the 600-yard event. Jeff almost panicked when it was announced that a blind youth would be running in the 600-yard event, and that absolute quiet would be necessary so he could hear the 'beep'.

Jeff said to himself, "I can't do it"; but as he ran he kept repeating, "I must, I must, I must". When he crossed the finish line, his teammates hugged him hilariously. They and Jeff both knew that his achievement was more than a running victory.

When he was 11 and a Boy Scout, both Jeff and his parents were very excited and thrilled to receive a four-volume set of the Boy Scout Handbook in Braille which was loaned to him by the Toledo Society for the Blind. Two photographers came to their home and took Jeff's picture while he was reading the Scout motto from the Braille book.

Much more could be told of Jeff's first 18 years—his achievements, and his dreams that became realizations. And there will be much more to tell after his four years at the Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

And after that, what will there be to tell? Perhaps he will become a world renowned musician.



Jeff Zavac "tooting his sax"



Paul Goff, Metropolitan Park Chief Naturalist, explaining nature's handiwork at Oak Openings picnic.

Oak Openings Picnic

"Poems are made by fools like me, but only God can make a tree."

These words might well have been the feeling of inspiration of Paul Goff, Metropolitan Park Chief Naturalist, as he related much of nature's handiwork to the 15 blind people who, with their families and friends, attended the outdoor meeting at Oak Openings in July.

"Now this is the white oak; feel the bark—note the difference between this and the red oak," he said as they felt these two textures. There were many different kinds of trees, tree mosses, and lichens, too, over which he had them run their hands.

Then to the different kinds of leaves—and did you know that cicely is also the sweet anise root? The people touched it and the blackberry and raspberry bushes—they touched them all. "This is a 'Virginia Creeper' and those soft spots in the earth are where the moles are—they eat the grubs. And this is a May apple plant but the apples are not ripe yet," Mr. Goff noted.

Then the group moved into another area where the bushes were loaded with an odor, like sassafras root—but then it was time for the picnic lunch in the shelter house.

We hope we can go to Oak Openings again next year with many more blind people and their sighted guides. Mr. Goff uses particular effort on these tours for the blind.

With the help of the "extra income" we receive from the sale of our Christmas cards, this July outing to Oak Openings is one of the many family activities we are able to have throughout the year.

From September through May our monthly "Family Nights" at the Society's building include dinner followed by various types of family entertainment. June is always reserved for our annual trip to the Toledo Zoo, while August is the time for the much anticipated and appreciated week of swimming, fishing, and boating at summer camp.

Message from the President

We have you on our mailing list because we regard you as a friend of the blind. For over 40 years Toledo people have been remembering us in their Wills and with gifts. Without these, we could not handle our many needs.

If you would like to help us, even after your own life has ended, you can say so in your Will. Here is a suggested form for such a bequest:

"I hereby devise and bequeath unto the Toledo Society for the Blind, a Toledo, Ohio non-profit corporation, the following described property (if real estate, describe it; if money, state the amount; if stocks, designate specifically).

Thank you
John Goerlich
President